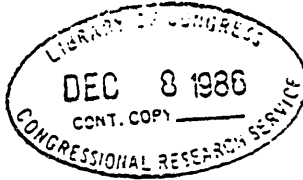


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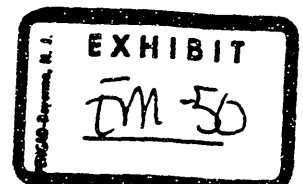
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National Security Council and Implementation of United States Policy Toward Iran

*Remarks Announcing a Review of the
Council's Role and Procedures.
November 25, 1986*

The President. Last Friday, after becoming concerned whether my national security apparatus had provided me with a security—or a complete factual record with respect to the implementation of my policy toward Iran, I directed the Attorney General¹ to undertake a review of this matter over the weekend and report to me on Monday. And yesterday Secretary Meese provided me and the White House Chief of Staff² with a report on his preliminary findings. And this report led me to conclude that I was not fully informed on the nature of one of the activities undertaken in connection with this initiative. This action raises serious questions of propriety.

I've just met with my national security advisers and congressional leaders to inform them of the actions that I'm taking today. Determination of the full details of this action will require further review and investigation by the Department of Justice. Looking to the future, I will appoint a special review board to conduct a comprehensive review of the role and procedures of the National Security Council staff in the conduct of foreign and national security policy. I anticipate receiving the reports from the Attorney General and the special review board at the earliest possible date. Upon the completion of these reports, I will share their findings and conclusions with the Congress and the American people.

Although not directly involved, Vice Admiral John Poindexter has asked to be relieved of his assignment as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and to return to another assignment in the

Navy. Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North has been relieved of his duties on the National Security Council staff.

I am deeply troubled that the implementation of a policy aimed at resolving a truly tragic situation in the Middle East has resulted in such controversy. As I've stated previously, I believe our policy goals toward Iran were well-founded. However, the information brought to my attention yesterday convinced me that in one aspect implementation of that policy was seriously flawed. While I cannot reverse what has happened, I'm initiating steps, including those I've announced today, to assure that the implementation of all future foreign and national security policy initiatives will proceed only in accordance with my authorization.

Over the past 6 years we've realized many foreign policy goals I believe we can yet achieve—and I intend to pursue—the objectives on which we all agree: a safer, more secure, and stable world.

And now, I'm going to ask Attorney General Meese to brief you.

Reporter. What was the flaw?

Q. Do you still maintain you didn't make a mistake, Mr. President?

The President. Hold it.

Q. Did you make a mistake in sending arms to Tehran, sir?

The President. No, and I'm not taking any more questions. And in just a second I'm going to ask Attorney General Meese to brief you on what we presently know about what he has found out.

Q. Is anyone else going to be let go, sir?

Q. Can you tell us—did Secretary Shultz—

Q. Is anyone else going to be let go? There have been calls for—

The President. No one was let go. They chose to go.

Q. What about Secretary Shultz, Mr. President?

Q. Is Shultz going to stay, sir?

¹Attorney General Edwin Meese III.

²Donald T. Regan, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff.

³Deputy Director for Political-Military Affairs.

Q. How about Secretary Shultz and Mr. Reagan, sir?

Q. What about Secretary Shultz, sir?

Q. Can you tell us if Secretary Shultz is going to stay?

Q. Can you give Secretary Shultz a vote of confidence if you feel that way?

The President. May I give you Attorney General Meese?

Q. And who is going to run national security?

Q. What about Shultz, sir?

Q. Why won't you say what the flaw is?

Note: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. to reporters assembled in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Special Review Board for the National Security Council

*Statement by the President.
November 26, 1986*

I am pleased to announce the appointment of former Senator John Tower, former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, and former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft—three distinguished experts in foreign policy and national security affairs—to serve as the members of the Special Review Board I announced yesterday. Former Senator Tower has agreed to serve as the Board's Chairman.

As I indicated, the Special Review Board will conduct a comprehensive study of the future role and procedures of the National Security Council staff in the development, coordination, oversight, and conduct of foreign and national security policy. In particular, I have asked the Board to review the NSC staff's proper role in operational activities, especially extremely sensitive diplomatic, military, and intelligence missions. Specifically, they should look at the manner in which foreign and national security policies I established have been implemented by the NSC staff. In conducting their

review, the Board will have full and complete access to the NSC staff and its resources as well as the cooperation of the other Departments and Agencies in the executive branch.

I hope the Board will conduct its review in a prompt and thorough manner. Upon its completion, I intend to share its findings with Congress and the American people.

Special Review Board for the National Security Council

*Appointment of the Membership.
November 26, 1986*

The President today announced the appointment of the following individuals to be members of his Special Review Board:

John Goodwin Tower, of Texas. Former Senator Tower most recently has served as a U.S. negotiator on strategic nuclear arms, 1985-1986. He was a U.S. Senator from the State of Texas, where he served on the Senate Armed Services Committee, 1961-1985; an assistant professor of history and political science, Midwestern State University, in Wichita Falls, TX. Former Senator Tower was born September 29, 1925, in Houston, TX.

Edmund Sixtus Muskie, of Maine. Former Senator Muskie served as Secretary of State, May 1950-January 1951; and as a U.S. Senator from the State of Maine, 1959-1980, serving on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Edmund Muskie is currently engaged in the private practice of law with the firm of Chadbourne & Parke in Washington, DC, and New York City. He was born March 28, 1914, in Rumford, ME.

Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret.), of Maryland. General Scowcroft is vice chairman of Kissinger Associates, Inc., in Washington, DC. Most recently, General Scowcroft has served on the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, 1985; and he served as Chairman of the President's Commission on Strategic Forces, 1983. General Scowcroft was an Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, 1975-1977. He was born March 19, 1925, in Ogden, UT.